

# What Would Happen If We Stopped Vaccinations?

These diseases still exist and can become common again  
- and deadly- if vaccination coverage does not continue  
at high levels.

## Pertussis

**Pertussis can be a severe illness**, resulting in prolonged coughing spells that can last for many weeks. These spells can make it difficult for a child to eat, drink, and breathe. Because vomiting often occurs after a coughing spell, infants may lose weight and become dehydrated. In infants, **it can also cause pneumonia and lead to brain damage, seizures, and mental retardation.**

Before pertussis immunizations were available, nearly all children developed whooping cough. In the U.S., prior to pertussis immunization, between 150,000 and 260,000 cases of pertussis were reported each year, with up to **9,000** pertussis-related deaths.

Compared with pertussis cases in other age groups, **infants** who are 6 months old or younger with pertussis experience the highest rate of hospitalization, pneumonia, seizures, Encephalopathy (a degenerative disease of the brain) and death.

**Protect Someone You Love – Immunize!**

**For more information:**